

may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the concurrent resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. UPTON). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, House Concurrent Resolution 131, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

CORAL REEF CONSERVATION ACT OF 1997

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2233) to assist in the conservation of coral reefs, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2233

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Coral Reef Conservation Act of 1997".

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are the following:

- (1) To preserve, sustain, and restore the health of coral reef ecosystems.
- (2) To assist in the conservation and protection of coral reefs by supporting conservation programs.
- (3) To provide financial resources for those programs.
- (4) To establish a formal mechanism for collecting and allocating monetary donations from the private sector to be used for coral reef conservation projects.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **CORAL.**—The term "coral" means species of the phylum Cnidaria, including—

(A) all species of the orders Antipatharia (black corals), Scleractinia (stony corals), Gorgonacea (horny corals), Stolonifera (organpipe corals and others), and Coenothecalia (blue coral), of the class Anthozoa; and

(B) all species of the order Hydrocorallina (fire corals and hydrocorals), of the class Hydrozoa.

(2) **CORAL REEF.**—The term "coral reef" means any reef or shoal composed primarily of the skeletal material of species of the order Scleractinia (class Anthozoa).

(3) **CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM.**—The term "coral reef ecosystem" means the complex of species associated with coral reefs and their environment that—

(A) functions as an ecological unit in nature; and

(B) is necessary for that function to continue.

(4) **CORALS AND CORAL PRODUCTS.**—The term "corals and coral products" means any liv-

ing or dead specimens, parts, or derivatives, or any product containing specimens, parts, or derivatives, of any species referred to in paragraph (1).

(5) **CONSERVATION.**—The term "conservation" means the use of methods and procedures necessary to preserve or sustain corals and species associated with coral reefs as diverse, viable, and self-perpetuating coral reef ecosystems, including all activities associated with resource management, such as conservation, protection, restoration, and management of habitat; habitat monitoring; assistance in the development of management strategies for marine protected areas and marine resources consistent with the National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.); law enforcement through community participation; conflict resolution initiatives; and community outreach and education.

(6) **FUND.**—The term "Fund" means the Coral Reef Conservation Fund established under section 5(a).

(7) **SECRETARY.**—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Commerce.

SEC. 4. CORAL REEF CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, subject to the availability of funds, shall use amounts in the Fund to provide grants of financial assistance for projects for the conservation of coral reefs for which final project proposals are approved by the Secretary in accordance with this section.

(b) **PROJECT PROPOSAL.**—Any relevant natural resource management authority of a State or territory of the United States or other government jurisdiction with coral reefs whose activities directly or indirectly affect coral reefs, or any nongovernmental organization or individual with demonstrated expertise in the conservation of coral reefs, may submit to the Secretary a project proposal under this section. Each proposal shall include the following:

- (1) The name of the individual responsible for conducting the project.
- (2) A succinct statement of the purposes of the project.
- (3) A description of the qualifications of the individuals who will conduct the project.
- (4) An estimate of the funds and time required to complete the project.
- (5) Evidence of support of the project by appropriate representatives of States or territories of the United States or other government jurisdictions in which the project will be conducted, if the Secretary determines that the support is required for the success of the project.
- (6) Information regarding the source and amount of matching funding available to the applicant.
- (7) Any other information the Secretary considers to be necessary for evaluating the eligibility of the project for funding under this Act.

(c) **PROJECT REVIEW AND APPROVAL.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall review each final project proposal to determine if it meets the criteria set forth in subsection (d).

(2) **CONSULTATION: APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL.**—Not later than 6 months after receiving a final project proposal, and subject to the availability of funds, the Secretary shall—

(A) request written comments on the proposal from each State or territory of the United States or other government jurisdiction, including the relevant regional fishery management councils established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), within which the project is to be conducted;

(B) provide for the merit-based peer review of the proposal and require standardized documentation of that peer review;

(C) after reviewing any written comments and recommendations based on merit review, approve or disapprove the proposal; and

(D) provide written notification of that approval or disapproval to the person who submitted the proposal, and each of those States, territories, and other government jurisdictions.

(d) **CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL.**—The Secretary may approve a final project proposal under this section if the project will enhance programs for conservation of coral reefs by assisting efforts to—

- (1) implement conservation programs;
- (2) address the conflicts arising from the use of environments near coral reefs or from the use of corals, species associated with coral reefs, and coral products;
- (3) enhance compliance with laws that prohibit or regulate the taking of corals, species associated with coral reefs, and coral products or regulate the use and management of coral reef ecosystems;
- (4) develop sound scientific information on the condition of coral reef ecosystems or the threats to such ecosystems; or
- (5) promote cooperative projects on coral reef conservation that involve foreign governments, affected local communities, nongovernmental organizations, or others in the private sector.

(e) **PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY.**—In determining whether to approve project proposals under this section, the Secretary shall give priority to projects which promote sustainable development and ensure effective, long-term conservation of coral reefs.

(f) **PROJECT REPORTING.**—Each grantee under this section shall provide periodic reports, as the Secretary considers necessary, to the Secretary. Each report shall include all information required by the Secretary for evaluating the progress and success of the project.

(g) **MATCHING FUNDS.**—The Secretary may not approve a project under this section unless the Secretary determines that there are non-Federal matching funds available to pay at least 50 percent of the total cost of the project.

SEC. 5. CORAL REEF CONSERVATION FUND.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established in the general fund of the Treasury a separate account, to be known as the "Coral Reef Conservation Fund", which shall consist of amounts deposited into the Fund by the Secretary of the Treasury under subsection (b).

(b) **DEPOSITS INTO THE FUND.**—The Secretary of the Treasury shall deposit into the Fund—

- (1) all amounts received by the Secretary in the form of monetary donations under subsection (d); and
- (2) other amounts appropriated to the Fund.

(c) **USE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraph (2), the Secretary may use amounts in the Fund without further appropriation to provide assistance under section 4.

(2) **ADMINISTRATION.**—Of amounts in the Fund available for each fiscal year, the Secretary may use not more than 3 percent to administer the Fund.

(d) **ACCEPTANCE AND USE OF MONETARY DONATIONS.**—The Secretary may accept and use monetary donations to provide assistance under section 4. Amounts received by the Secretary in the form of donations shall be transferred to the Secretary of the Treasury for deposit into the Fund.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Fund \$1,000,000 for each of fiscal years

1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 to carry out this Act, which may remain available until expended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] and the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR], each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON].

(Mr. SAXTON asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, we are now considering H.R. 2233, the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 1997.

The gentleman from Hawaii [Mr. ABERCROMBIE] and I and the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR] introduced this bill to promote conservation of coral reef ecosystems.

The Committee on Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife, and Oceans, which I chair, had two coral-reef-related hearings this year, and it is very clear that coral reefs are an important natural resource for coastal nations worldwide and many U.S. States and territories. Reefs generate significant tourism, provide habitat for many commercial fisheries, and protect coastlines from storm damage.

Unfortunately, coral reefs worldwide are also in great danger from both natural and human-induced causes. In the U.S. waters near Florida, six new coral reef diseases have been identified in the last 5 years, and they are spreading rapidly. In the Philippines, an astounding 70 percent of native reef environments have been obliterated by destructive fishing practices such as, believe it or not, dynamiting and cyanide fishing.

This bill establishes a coral reef conservation fund which is modeled after existing programs such as the very successful African elephant conservation program. This fund will contain both appropriated moneys and donations. Grants from the fund will support conservation projects which benefit coral reefs worldwide.

The bill authorizes \$1 million to be appropriated into the fund annually for the next 5 years and requires that all grants be matched by other funds on a one-to-one basis.

Mr. Speaker, this type of conservation approach has been very successful for African elephants and other threatened species. I believe that this bill can make a difference in reducing damage to coral reefs worldwide. I urge my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

(Mr. FARR of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 2233. This bill will help provide much needed funding

for research and conservation projects at coral reef ecosystems. The health of these ecosystems is in decline globally due to a wide range of threats, including nonsource pollution, destructive fishing practices, unwise coastal development, and global climate change. If we do not act decisively and soon, there will be no reefs left to save in just a few years.

Why is it important to save it? The reefs essentially are the rain forests of the ocean. That is where most of the biological life live. If we lose these reefs, we lose much more than just their picturesque beauty, we lose a world class storehouse of marine biodiversity and a renewable economic resource that is vital to coastal and insular nations.

H.R. 2233 is a good first step in addressing these problems. The amendment before the House requires a match for every Federal dollar so that research funds can even go further than originally drafted. I support the amendment. I urge all my colleagues on this side of the aisle to do so as well.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I would just conclude by saying that the gentleman from California [Mr. FARR] and I made note of some successes that we have had over the last decade in terms of protecting the ocean habitat.

While this is one of the great failures of humankind in the way we have taken the coral reef systems for granted and the practices that we have continued to perpetuate that have caused great damage to the coral reef systems, which, as Mr. FARR eloquently pointed out, are immensely important to the ocean ecosystems and the interdependence of life in the oceans, when we held our hearings and it was brought to light publicly that two of the ways, two of the techniques of fishing are through the use of dynamite and cyanide, I looked at those issues with some disbelief. But we should not look at those issues with disbelief because they are, in fact, practices that are used which do cause great damage not only to the coral reef system but, obviously, to other life in the oceans as well.

While we have had some successes over the last 10 years, it is pretty obvious that our work is not completed. Passage of this bill is perhaps a good first step in addressing the problems that are still to be addressed.

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2233, the Coral Reef Conservation Act, a bill introduced by our colleagues JIM SAXTON and NEIL ABERCROMBIE.

While there may be only a few scattered corals in Alaska, coral reefs represent a new frontier source for medicines and lifesaving products. In addition, they provide natural protection for coastlines from high waves, storm surges, coastal erosion, and accompanying threats to human life and property.

Furthermore, coral reefs are particularly important in generating tourism, and they contain some of the world's most productive marine habitats. These reefs make a real contribution to the economies where they are located.

This bill is a positive effort to protect our Nation's coral reefs, and I am confident that the Department of Commerce will effectively manage the Coral Reef Conservation Fund.

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Jersey [Mr. SAXTON] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2233, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, I object to the vote on the ground that a quorum is not present and make the point of order that a quorum is not present.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

The point of no quorum is considered withdrawn.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SAXTON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2233, the bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

CANADIAN RIVER RECLAMATION PROJECT

Mr. THORNBERRY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2007) to amend the Act that authorized the Canadian River reclamation project, Texas, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to allow use of the project distribution system to transport water from sources other than the project, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 2007

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. USE OF DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM OF CANADIAN RIVER RECLAMATION PROJECT, TEXAS, TO TRANSPORT NONPROJECT WATER.

The Act of December 29, 1950 (chapter 1183; 43 U.S.C. 600b, 600c), authorizing construction, operation, and maintenance of the Canadian River reclamation project, Texas, is amended by adding at the end the following new section:

"SEC. 4. (a) The Secretary of the Interior shall allow use of the project distribution system (including all pipelines, aqueducts, pumping plants, and related facilities) for transport of water from the Canadian River Conjunctive Use Groundwater Project to municipalities that are receiving water from the project. Such use shall be subject only to such environmental review as is required under the Memorandum of Understanding,